

# Identity Iceberg

## Recommended for Elementary Grades

### Overview

Students explore the concept of an iceberg as a metaphor for our identity – some parts are noticeable (above the surface), while others are hidden (below the surface) – and create their own “identity iceberg”. The activity bridges to disability to illustrate that disability can be one aspect of a person’s identity and some disabilities are visible while others are non-apparent.



#### Activity Instructions

1. On chart paper or on the board, draw a simple iceberg like the one on the student handout (page 3).
2. Create your own “identity iceberg”, by adding various personal traits to the iceberg, while explaining why you put certain traits above the surface and others below the surface of the water.
3. As you complete the example, have students begin to think of their own identity. Depending on grade level, use appropriate prompts to facilitate student thinking:
  - “What do people see when they look at you?”
  - “Do you wear something special, like a hijab or glasses?”
  - “What games or sports do people see you playing?”
  - “What’s something you like that not many people know?”
  - “How do you feel when you’re learning something new?”
  - “Do you have a secret talent or big dream?”
  - “What languages do you speak?”



### Activity Instructions

4. Provide students with copies of the student handout on page 3.
5. Have students create their own identity iceberg with at least 3 “above the surface” traits and 4-5 “below the surface” traits.
6. Invite volunteers to share 1-2 aspects of their identities with the class if they feel comfortable

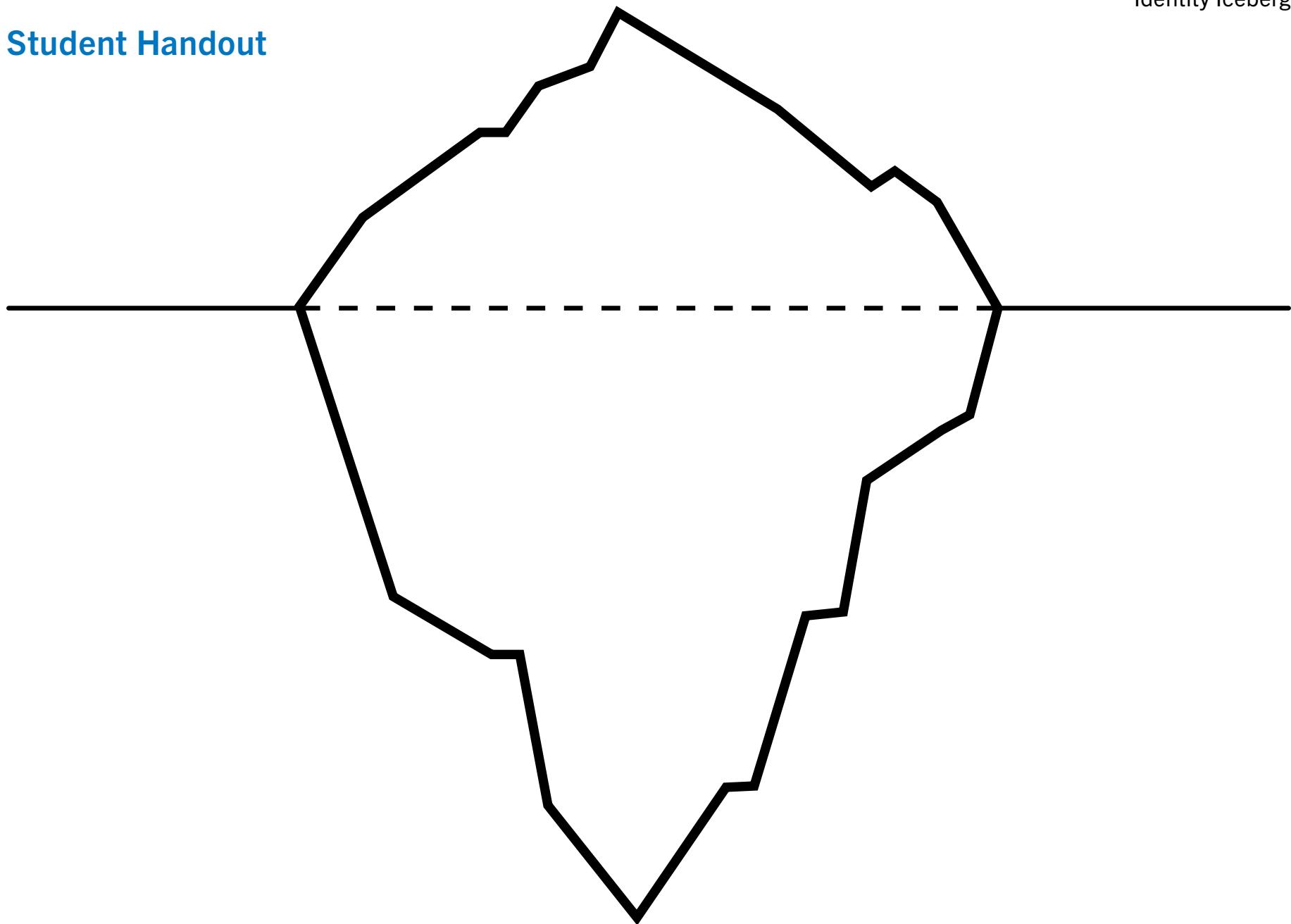
### Collaborative Option

Create a large class iceberg using sticky notes or sentence strips, sorted into “above the surface” and “below the surface” traits.

### Bridge to Disability

7. Wrap up the activity and consolidate learning by bridging the conversation to disability. Ask students: “Is disability always visible?”
  - Use examples like ADHD, chronic illness, wheelchair use, etc.
  - Reinforce: “Disability can be something we see, like using a wheelchair, or something we don’t see, like needing help focusing.”
  - Emphasize that disability is just one part of someone’s identity. Key message: “Disability is just one part of someone’s identity, and whether you can see it or not, everyone deserves to be understood and respected.”

**Student Handout**



**Check out our other Rick Hansen Foundation School Program offerings - available for youth of every age and grade level!**

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### **Lessons and Activities**

Classroom lessons and activities engage students on the topics of disability, accessibility and inclusion, and support teachers in leading these important conversations. Our online resource library provides access to lessons for grades K-12, in French and English, in a variety of subject areas, and that connect to the educational values of collaboration and relationships, critical thinking, equity and inclusion, personal growth, and social awareness and citizenship.

### **Videos and Storybooks**

Disability representation comes to life through fun storybooks and impactful videos. Books for younger readers including Roll On and The Boy Who Loved to Move are available in multiple formats including E-book and audiobook, and videos such as On the Move for elementary grades and Just Like U for secondary grades can all be accessed through our resource library.

### **Ambassador Presentations**

RHF Ambassadors are speakers with diverse lived experiences of vision, hearing and mobility disabilities who engage youth with their personal stories. By challenging perceptions about disability, youth are motivated to learn more about how they can become champions for change. Presentations are available at no cost to schools.

### **Difference Maker of the Year Awards**

It is important to acknowledge and celebrate how youth are making a difference. These annual awards recognize youth for their contributions in creating accessible and inclusive schools and communities for people with disabilities.

**Learn more, access resources, book an Ambassador Presentation, or nominate your Difference Maker at:  
[RickHansen.com/Schools](http://RickHansen.com/Schools)**



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